Carolyn Capobianco Receives 2012 PBA Pro Bono Partner Award

Carolyn M. Capobianco, an administrator with the law firm of Ballard Spahr who coordinates the Wills for Heroes program in Pennsylvania and beyond, is the winner of the 2012 PBA Pro Bono Partner Award, presented to a non-lawyer who supports legal services to those in need.

"Carolyn is the engine that drives the Wills for Heroes program in Pennsylvania," said David Keller Trevaskis, PBA pro bono coordinator, on making the presentation. "Her service underscores the importance of non-lawyer partners in making pro bono service work!"

Wills for Heroes is a project of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and calls upon the expertise of legal support professionals such as Capobianco, as well as attorneys and other community partners, to provide the free legal services. Without a will, state law determines who receives what property from an estate and loved ones are faced with tedious paperwork and difficult decisions. Legal fees for preparing a will and other estate planning documents often run $1,000 or more. Several state and national first responder organizations estimate that 80 to 90 percent of first responders do not have wills, and Pennsylvania has more first responders than any other state. Thanks to the volunteer efforts of Capobianco, Pennsylvania has one of the largest WFH programs in the country and have helped to provide more than 10,000 with wills and other estate documents. Capobianco is the glue that holds the Pennsylvania WFH effort together and without her energy, enthusiasm and skill, the program would not be the huge success it is.

Recognizing the important role that non-attorneys play in WFH, the statewide program has instituted its own award for such volunteers. The PBA honors Capobianco with this broader award because her contribution goes beyond the boundaries of any one program. She is a force for good and justice!

Shown below with Capobianco holding her award are Dan J.T. McKenna (back, left), co-director of the Pennsylvania WFH program and president of the national WFH Foundation; Trevaskis (back, right); and Mary Gay Scanlon, pro bono counsel for Ballard Spahr and chair of the firm's Pro Bono Committee.